

## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Education

### **\$7.3-MILLION ECO-FRIENDLY HAPPY VALLEY SCHOOL RE-OPENS**

VICTORIA – Education Minister Shirley Bond joined the Sooke school board, district staff and community leaders today for a ribbon-cutting ceremony to officially reopen an environmentally friendly Happy Valley elementary school to students and the community.

"I'm delighted that we are able to open a brand new Happy Valley school today in its original location," said Bond. "Not only is it heartwarming see these children returning to the school they consider home, but it's that much more special to know their new school also leaves a lighter footprint on our environment."

The new Happy Valley school replaces the one that was destroyed by fire in October 2004 and was built in partnership with the municipality. It boasts:

- Three rooms for community-use space.
- A state-of-the-art library as a result of a special government grant and a donation from the trust of Joe Wo, father of former teacher Gary Wong.
- Upgraded seismic resistance and back-up power generation so that the school can act as an emergency centre in the event of a disaster.

"This school has lived many lives through the years and has always been a safe haven, close at hand for students," said Margot Swinburnson, chair of the Sooke school district. "Now, in its rebirth and through an excellent working relationship between the school district and District of Langford, it has become a safe haven for the whole community in the event of a disaster."

The school was constructed using materials that were selected to minimize environmental impact and optimize use of locally produced goods. The school has a natural ventilation system designed to modern ventilation standards and uses available daylight to reduce artificial lighting requirements and energy consumption. The design of Happy Valley school supports the government's election platform and throne speech commitments to take action on climate change.

"This project is an excellent example of how the Province, school boards and communities are working together to stem the growth of global warming," said Bond. "This eco-friendly school will also help us reach our goal of reducing B.C.'s greenhouse gas emissions by at least 33 per cent below current levels by 2020."

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Since 2001, the Province has spent over \$1 billion to complete 26 new schools, 32 replacements, 140 additions and 22 renovation projects across British Columbia. By the end of 2008-09, the Province will have invested more than \$2.8 billion in school capital and maintenance projects across British Columbia.

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